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(54) **Centralized transponder arbitration**

(57) The present invention relates to determining the proximity of a tag to a fuel dispensing position of a forecourt (20) and provides a system to store a sequence of data records relating to attributes of interactions between fuel dispensers (20) and tags (100). The data records may be stored on the tag or at a location remote from the tag, such as a fuel dispenser, central site controller (28) or other network (300). The data records may contain the identity of the dispenser, tag and any attribute or a received signal, such as frequency

band or signal strength, or other attribute indicative of proximity. Every dispenser (200) that attempts to communicate with a tag (100) adds its won interaction data to a limited history of a tag's past interactions with the same and other dispensers. When a dispenser (200) or central site control system (28) examines the contents of the interaction histories, the detected presence of other dispensers or the relative strength of the recorded interaction attributes will determine what, if any, action is to be taken by the dispensers or central site control system to communicate with the tag.

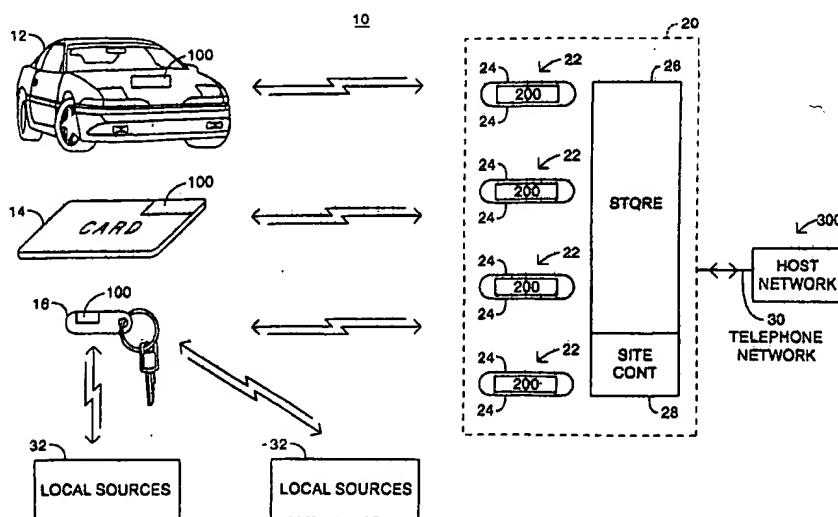


FIG. 1

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European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 99 30 4901

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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 25 September 2000	Examiner Meyl, D
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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